

County Council Members:

I respectfully ask that you deny County Executive Elrich's proposed recommendation for a proof of vaccination for entry of certain establishments (e.g., gyms, restaurants) as I believe it would produce an unnecessary burden on these businesses and patrons without a direct, reasonable, and measurable benefit to the public health objective of reducing COVID cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

The inherent objective of similar measures passed in other jurisdictions, and recently echoed by Dr. Fauci, is to try and induce non vaccinated individuals to finally get the vaccine for fear of losing out on common life privileges (e.g., working out and going to dinner).

Is this necessary in our county, which per recent reports is tracking close to 85% and is one of the highest in the US?

Instead, by passing this provision, the county will add another layer of administrative and operational costs to businesses in our county. These costs range from the added transactional and staffing costs of "carding" patrons to wrestling with the inherent ambiguity associated with administering the provision (i.e., treatment of out of county visitors? how do you prove legitimate medical/religious exception? how long is this provision going to last?).

For argument sake, let's presume by passing this ordinance, the county's vaccination rate increases above 85%. Would this matter in terms of Omicron's spread and impact? As recent public health experts have reminded us, the purpose of the vaccine is not to eliminate cases, but to reduce the number of serious cases that result in hospitalizations and deaths. Based on data from South Africa and other jurisdictions, this seems to be the case with Omicron and for those who are vaccinated. With our high vaccination rate, and overall lack of vaccine reluctance in this county, will increasing the vaccination rate a few % points really have a positive health impact? Do our businesses know how to fully administer this, what is the anticipated costs to them? Shouldn't we know that answer before we pass another regulation that impacts our businesses?

Classically, the government bears the responsibility for proving and ensuring

that new regulations bear a reasonable relationship to a legitimate government interest and do not produce an undue burden.

I don't see how that has been proven in this case and thus believe this measure shouldn't pass.

Of note, thankfully none of our neighboring counties in Maryland or in Northern Virginia have passed such a measure. As a long time resident of this county, and one who is fully and thankfully vaccinated, it does appear that it is time that I start looking to dine in these other jurisdictions.

Respectfully,

Glenn Reemes